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MESSAGE FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

As I type the words for this “Spring Edition” of the Dakota Pack, it still looks very much like winter outside with a new blanket of snow on the ground. The use of the term “banana belt” to describe winter in the Black Hills has not been applicable this year. Fortunately, we are accustomed to winter’s elements here and other than our state activations following Winter Storm Atlas last October, we have not had to respond to winter emergencies.

I recently returned from a week in Washington, D.C. where all 54 adjutants general met to discuss the current issues facing the National Guard. The topic that dominated both the Adjutants General Association of the United States meetings and the Guard Senior Leader Conference was the FY 2015-2019 Future Years Defense Plan. More specifically, there is great concern over the plan to cut the force structure of the Army National Guard in the years ahead. The budgeted end-strength for the Army Guard in the current fiscal year is 354,200. Under previous agreements, that number would be reduced to 350,200 in FY 2015, returning us to the manning levels we were at on 9/11. On Feb. 24, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced that the Army National Guard would be further reduced to 335,000. Additionally, our numbers would be cut to 315,000 in FY 2019 unless Congress provided relief from the sequester cuts in the years ahead.

The acting director of the ARNG provided a detailed briefing of the impact that a reduction to 335,000 would have on the individual states, and it would be significant. A reduction to 315,000 would result in hundreds of armories being closed across the U.S. Hopefully, a remedy will be developed to spare the ARNG from these proposed cuts.

On a brighter note, newly confirmed Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James attended a social reception with the adjutants general and returned the next day to address our group. She shared some of the details about the FY 2015 budget, which were generally favorable toward the Air National Guard. Her plan would cut the active duty Air Force by 16,700, the Air Force Reserve by 3,300 while the Air Guard would only lose 400 positions. Secretary James is a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and she spoke very favorably of placing increased reliance on the Guard and Reserve. We are very optimistic about the future with Secretary James and General Welsh at the helm of the Air Force.

We celebrated the safe return of the 235th MP Company and the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in December giving many families

another reason to celebrate during the holidays. On Feb. 13, we bid farewell to the 1742nd Transportation Company as they departed Fort Hood en route to Afghanistan. Please join me in keeping them in your daily prayers.

On Jan. 11, a huge group of co-workers, friends and family gathered to honor Brig. Gen. Ted Johnson as he retired following 35 years of exemplary service to state and nation. He took over as chief of staff almost nine years previously, serving in that capacity for three different adjutants general. His high standards, superior intellect, professionalism and dedication to duty have directly contributed to the South Dakota National Guard being held in such high esteem nationwide for many years. I want to personally thank both Ted and LuAnne for continually going above and beyond the call of duty and wish them the best in retirement.

On Feb. 6, we conducted the 30th National Guard Legislative Dining Out to thank our state legislators for their support and to honor a few special individuals for their extraordinary contributions to our great organization.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard received the Williamson Militiaman Award in recognition of his remarkable leadership and overwhelming support of the National Guard. During his eight years as lieutenant governor and three years as governor, he has attended countless activation and welcome home ceremonies. He traveled to Kuwait and Afghanistan to visit our deployed troops and he has provided enhanced funding for the maintenance and modernization of our facilities. NorthWestern Energy received the state’s 2013 Pro Patria Award from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. LuAnne Johnson was the recipient of the Adjutant General’s Family Award in recognition of the special support she provided as the wife and mother of SD Guard members and as a caring volunteer who dedicated hundreds of hours to help others.

I consider it a distinct honor to work with so many great individuals and groups who support our great organization. We have been truly blessed with the overwhelming support of community, state and nation. There are few times in the history of this great nation when the reliance on the National Guard has been greater than it is today. Fortunately, we have never been better manned, better trained or better equipped than we are right now. Thank you for continuing to serve in uniform during time of war.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy A. Reich".

The Adjutant General



MESSAGE FROM WING COMMANDER

Congratulations to the Wing's Outstanding Airmen of the Year recipients. Those nominated from your squadron or group should feel extremely proud as you represent more than 900 enlisted men and women. To our award recipients, I'm proud to have each of you representing the 114th Fighter Wing during the national Air National Guard competition; you truly are the best of the best!

The unit recently conducted a Snowbird deployment to Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Ariz. My hats off to Maintenance Group who produced an outstanding 120 sorties flown with 120 sorties scheduled in this two week deployment. The 86 percent mission capable rate and only four non-chargeable ground aborts is a testament to all the hard work that you've accomplished on this new fleet of Block 40 aircraft. The aircraft provided Operations Group with an amazing opportunity; dropping nearly 70 live munitions and 15,000 rounds of 20 mm.

I'd like to thank you for the effort you have already put into the new Air Force Inspection System. This new inspection system is a transformational shift in our thinking about unit effectiveness and the reliance of external inspections as the primary indicator of

unit health. This typically led to large amounts of resources for inspection preparation and contributed little to mission readiness. The new inspection system is centered on the Commander's Inspection Program. It is designed to enable commanders with a supporting system to find and fix problems. It rewards accurate, honest reporting and long term commitment to process improvement. We have resourced our Wing Inspection General office and are well on our way to be fully operational. We will have our Unit Effectiveness Inspection "Capstone" event in June. This is not a "graduation event," it is merely a validation and verification snapshot of our overall continuous improvement plan, unit effectiveness and the program. We need to continue our focus on mission readiness and being the most professional, highly trained, ready and relevant Airmen you can be.

As I write this article, we once again have all of our Airmen home from deployment. I know it won't last long as we will have great patriots deploying again soon. Please spend time and thank those who support you in your service to this great unit, state and nation. Thanks for all you do every day!

Col. Russ A. Walz
114th Fighter Wing Commander

While you're fighting for *our* freedom, don't forget your *own*.

Doctors say tobacco users are 2 times more likely to quit if they use a quit coach.



Tobacco. There's no freedom in it.



MESSAGE FROM THE STATE COMMAND SGT. MAJ.

Hunting the good stuff! For many of you, that statement was a daily comment made for two weeks during your resiliency training. It's a statement that should be made by us with our co-workers and families every day. When is the last time you asked a family member or co-worker for a good stuff story? It's an easy gateway to use in order to know how someone is doing. I challenge you to ask one person a day to come up with a good stuff story that has happened to them in the last 24 hours. If they can't, please take the time to help them find the good stuff. You never know how much difference you make in someone's life.

Over the last year, I have listened to ideas on how to improve life for the enlisted Soldiers. Some areas we have changed and some areas will take time to change. However, one of the things that will help us grow stronger as a fighting force is to follow the Army's 2014 training guidance: We will train and focus on "America's Army – Our Profession" The Program concentrates on: (1) Standards and Discipline; (2) Army Customs, Courtesies and Traditions; (3) Military Expertise; and (4) Trust (<http://cape.army.mil/>).

A custom is a practice so long established that it has the force or validity of law. Courtesy among Army professionals is vital to maintain discipline. Something as simple as a salute is a courtesy that when continually rendered promotes discipline.

Tradition is a customary pattern of thought, action or behavior held by an identifiable group of people. This all equals Esprit de Corps, the winning spirit within the Army profession, embedded in the culture, sustained by traditions and customs, which fosters cohesive and confident units with the courage to persevere. It is one of the Army Profession's Essential Characteristics (ADRP 1).

We are all bestowed a special honor as a Soldier in the National Guard. We are the Citizen Soldier. We are in the public eye and the public expects us to follow and maintain our Army traditions and to have military expertise. As a Soldier and citizen, the public needs to see that we are trustworthy of the responsibilities we have been given. One way to demonstrate who we are to the public is to get involved with community activities. Become a participant, volunteer, serve, community organizations always need help. Bridge that gap between military and civilian entities and show not only your neighbors who you are, but prove to yourself just what you are made of.

I implore all of you to stay vigilant, strive to create relationships that strengthen your teams, and remember to treat each day as a job interview. We have the tools to be successful – use them well stay Army Strong and never forget to hunt "THE GOOD STUFF."

Thank you for all your comments, suggestions, and optimism.

Sincerely,

Shoe
Command Sgt. Major Shoe



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Command Sgt. Maj. George Arends, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, hands incoming 153rd Engineer Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Mettler the noncommissioned officers sword during a change-of-responsibility ceremony, Feb. 1, at the Huron National Guard Armory. The passing of the sword signifies the relinquishing of responsibility and authority from the outgoing to the incoming command sergeant major. Mettler assumes responsibility from outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Burgeson (left). (Photo by Sgt. Tabitha Carr)

153RD ENGINEER BATTALION WELCOMES NEW SENIOR ENLISTED SOLDIER

By Staff Sgt. Christina Sahrer
153rd Engineer Battalion

HURON – Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Mettler, of Sioux Falls, assumed responsibility of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 153rd Engineer Battalion senior noncommissioned officer position during a change-of-responsibility ceremony, Feb. 1, at the Huron National Guard Armory.

Mettler assumed responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Burgeson, who has held the position since October 2008.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Burgeson is an outstanding noncommissioned officer that has contributed greatly to the engineer battalion and is an asset to any organization he is a part of and I wish him luck in his new assignment," said Lt. Col. David Dailey, 153rd Engineer Battalion commander. "Command Sgt. Maj. Mettler is another great example of what you look for in the top NCO of an organization and I am expecting great things from him.

"He brings a different set of skills that will provide a new perspective to the battalion command sergeant major position and will

continue the legacy of excellence that is the 153rd Engineer Battalion"

Mettler has served in the SDNG for 25 years and is transferring from the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Sioux Falls.

"I am grateful to be part of one of the best battalions in the South Dakota Army National Guard," said Mettler. "I look forward to mentoring and leading the Soldiers of the 153rd."

Burgeson, who has served in the engineer field for 26 years both on active duty and in the National Guard, will transfer to the 196th MEB as the chief operations sergeant.

"I would like to say thank you to the thousands of Soldiers and leaders that have touched my life and helped me along the way," said Burgeson. "I will miss the day-to-day camaraderie I have shared with all of the Soldiers of the 153rd.

The 153rd has approximately 845 Soldiers in seven units throughout 12 South Dakota communities. The battalion assists assigned units in meeting training, administrative and logistical requirements to maintain the unit's readiness in support of their state and federal missions.



GERLACH PROMOTED TO COLONEL

ARMOUR – Andrew Gerlach, a native of Armour, was promoted to colonel at the South Dakota Army National Guard's Leader's Conference, Feb. 7 in Pierre. Gerlach, who currently resides in Pierre, will now serve as the J2 Intelligence Branch chief in Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City. In his civilian career, Gerlach works full-time as the Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Revenue.

S.D. NATIONAL GUARD PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT & DENTIST RETURN FROM AFGHANISTAN



From left, Senior Airman Travis D. Lauseng, Tech. Sgt. Thomas G. Frost, Senior Airman Cody W. Hall, Tech. Sgt. Robert A. Hanson, Senior Airman Alex J. Portice, and Airman 1st Class Travis J. Boucher, all firefighters with the 114th Civil Engineer Squadron, pose for a picture at the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing, at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, August 2013. The six firefighters, who received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor, will return to their home unit in Sioux Falls this fall. (Courtesy photo)

OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD WITH VALOR RECEIVED BY AIRMEN

By Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA - Nine Airmen from the South Dakota Air National Guard 114th Fighter Wing's Civil Engineer Squadron were awarded the Outstanding Unit Award with valor device following their deployment to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing in Southwest Asia in 2013.

The Outstanding Unit Award is earned by a unit which performs exceptionally meritorious service, accomplishes specific acts of outstanding achievement, excels in combat operations against an armed enemy of the United States, or conducts with distinct military operations involving conflict with, or exposure to, a hostile action by any opposing foreign force. The Valor device is authorized when awarded for combat or combat support service.

The Airmen who earned the award include: Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey D. Deyong; Master Sgt. Allen J. Wolf; Master Sgt. Robert A. Hanson; Tech. Sgt. Thomas G. Frost; Staff Sgt. Emmy L. Heltzel; Tech. Sgt. Thomas G. Frost; Senior Airman Travis J. Boucher; Senior Airman Travis D. Lauseng; and Senior Airman Alex J. Portice.



South Dakota Army National Guard Soldier Maj. Murray Thompson, of Pierre, hugs his children, Caden, 9, and Gabi, 6, at Rapid City Regional Airport Dec. 12, after serving a three-month deployment in Afghanistan with the 251st Area Support Medical Company, South Carolina National Guard. Murray is a dentist with the Rapid City-based Medical Command and volunteered to deploy with the SCNG unit.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck)



Capt. Terry Henrie, of Philip, greets his two sons, Reese, 10, (left) and Evan, 5, and wife, Jennifer, at the Rapid City Regional Airport Jan. 16, after serving five months at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as a physician assistant. Henrie is a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Medical Command, of Rapid City, and works full-time at Philip Health Services, in Philip as a physician assistant. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen)



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen)

Members of the Black Hills Stock Show Foundation recognized 20 service members from the SDANG and Ellsworth Air Force Base during the 10th annual Military Appreciation Day luncheon, Feb. 4, at the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo.

BHSS FOUNDATION RECOGNIZES SERVICE MEMBERS

RAPID CITY – The Black Hills Stock Show Foundation recognized Soldiers from the SDANG and Airmen from Ellsworth Air Force Base, for the 10th consecutive year, during their Military Appreciation Day, Feb. 4, at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City.

Lynn Hussman, president and board member of the BHSSF, invited 20 service members to the military appreciation luncheon to honor their service and show their support of the men and women in uniform.

"We appreciate the Soldiers and Airmen that serve in the uniform and the foundation wanted to acknowledge that service and sacrifice," said Hussman. "People around the Rapid City community are so proud of our military members."

The BHSSF is a non-profit organization established to manage scholarship and grant programs benefitting the communities, the region and the people who support the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo and livestock industry.

"It is amazing how the Black Hills Stock Show Foundation board of directors take the time to recognize and honor the local men and women serving our country," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Darla Crown, South Dakota Army National Guard state command chief warrant officer. "The Stock Show is one of the premier events in Rapid City, and this luncheon is a wonderful token of generosity and displays of patriotism of the community in which we live."



Army Capt. Thadius Schmit, commander of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 235th Military Police Company, of Rapid City, accepts the Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Award on behalf of his unit from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Mr. John Hastings during a ceremony at the Pentagon, Feb. 28. The 235th Military Police Company Family Readiness Group was recognized as the best in the Army National Guard for its work providing support to families of the unit during the 235th's deployment to Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)

PENTAGON HONORS 235TH FAMILY READINESS GROUP

By Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen
SDNG Public Affairs Office

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Many Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard can feel overwhelmed with anxiety and stress when they say goodbye to their parents, spouse or children before stepping onto a plane headed toward a combat zone.

The stress can be caused by a number of things including the Soldier's concern for his or her loved ones wellbeing, but with help from the Family Readiness Group their stress is reduced.

The 235th Military Police Company FRG leaders Christina Schmit, Janna Christiansen and Liz Whitrock helped alleviate stress by building relationships between the wives, parents, children and grandparents before during and after the company's nine-month deployment in Afghanistan.

Not only were new relationships born but an exceptional FRG group was formed earning the 2013 Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Award for the National Guard at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 28.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Mr. John Hastings presented the awardees with a commemorative plaque and framed certificate along with a cash award from the Military Officers Association of America. The cash award is to be used to further enhance the unit's family support programs.

The RFRA recognizes one National Guard and Reserve unit from each of the seven Reserve components with the best programs to support their families. The program was established in 2000 to recognize the top unit Family Readiness program in each Reserve component that demonstrated outstanding family readiness while maintaining superior mission readiness.

One reason the FRG became a success is due to achieving the commander's goal of providing a friendly environment that encouraged people to participate in unit activities.

"My goal for the Family Readiness Group was to give families a chance to build relationships with each other, with someone who could relate to their issues," said Capt. Thadius Schmit, 235th commander. "Trying to get through a deployment alone is difficult. Families sacrifice so much; I wanted to give people ways to deal with the deployment without feeling alone."

Christina Schmit explains how she contributed to the FRG as the commander's wife and lead volunteer.

"I developed a whole new family and support structure," said Christina, 235th FRG lead volunteer and wife of the commander. "The mission I fulfilled was to keep the families abreast of information and give them a sense of support. When the families felt supported then the Soldiers could focus on their mission."

The FRG met more than 30 times throughout the year hosting or participating in social events to include: baby shower welcoming the

newest 235th family members; decorated a float for the Veteran's Day parade; sent more than 200 care packages to the Soldiers and Heroes Wear Blue memorial 5K run.

The FRG did more than fun activities together, they were also inspired to come up with a tangible fitness goal called "Run Them Home," which gained local and national news coverage.

Corey Wiczorek, girlfriend of 235th member Spc. Bronson Odle, came up with the concept for the FRG to run 13,894 miles, the round-trip distance between the unit's headquarters, in Rapid City to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, where the unit was stationed.

The FRG surpassed their goal in November by reaching 14,533.99 miles, an entire month before the 235th returned.

"When a group of people is faced with adversity they gel and form a bond that is pretty strong," said Christina. "It becomes so solid that they feel they can endure almost anything together."

Lynn Wright, SDNG senior family readiness support assistant, nominated the 235th FRG for the award.

"The 235th Military Police Company is an outstanding unit comprised of extremely caring, compassionate and dedicated Soldiers and family members," said Wright. "The command and the Family Readiness Group understand the importance of educating and informing families to make them ready and resilient for missions. The 235th is a model for other units to follow."

1742ND SOLDIERS HONORED AT DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY

By SDNG Public Affairs Office



Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1742nd Transportation Company are honored during a deployment ceremony Dec. 14, in Harrisburg. Hundreds of family members, friends and community supporters gathered at the Harrisburg High School auditorium to see the Sioux Falls and Flandreau-based unit off as they depart for a yearlong tour to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Beck)

HARRISBURG – About 160 Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1742nd Transportation Company were honored during a deployment ceremony in Harrisburg, Dec. 14. Hundreds of family members, friends and community supporters gathered at the Harrisburg High School auditorium to see the Soldiers off as they depart for a yearlong tour in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Speakers for the ceremony included Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Sen. John Thune, Congresswoman Kristi Noem and Brig. Gen. Kevin Griesse, assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG.

"We are here today to send the 1742nd off with our well wishes," said Daugaard. "You are the epitome of competency, dedication

and reliability and you represent the best of South Dakota."

"South Dakotans have always punched above their weight when it comes to answering the call to duty," said Thune. "We have a lot of men and women who are here today who are going to answer that call again – and we say thank you."

The mission of the Sioux Falls and Flandreau-based 1742nd is to provide transportation of both dry and refrigerated containerized cargo, general non-containerized cargo and bulk water and fuel products. For the past year, the 1742nd has undergone training at home and in Fort McCoy, Wis., to prepare them to move equipment and supplies.

"We are extremely proud of you and your unit," said Griesse. "You have executed a

rigorous training program preparing you for this deployment, and there is no doubt you are ready."

"In this deployment to Afghanistan you are going to undertake a critical role...the supply chain is absolutely vital to the success of any military operation," said Daugaard. "The Army cannot succeed without food, fuel, equipment and supplies."

1742nd commander, Capt. Tyler Gerlach, also spoke during the ceremony and has every confidence his Soldiers are ready.

"I've watched these men and women train and build their team, and I know without a doubt they have what it takes," he said. "It was a great experience to come here as a new member, as a commander, and watch the transformation from one year ago to where



Sgt. Thomas Paradeis, of the 1742nd Transportation Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, holds his daughter during the 1742nd's deployment ceremony. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Beck)

we are today. It is an awesome sight to see them stand and posture themselves like warriors at the end of our battle drills at Fort McCoy."

This will be the third mobilization for the 1742nd, which deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003-2004 and in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm in 1990-1991.

About a third of the 1742nd Soldiers are veterans. For the remaining members, it will be their first deployment to a combat environment. Both Soldiers and family members expressed anxiousness of the upcoming experience.

"Like anyone else, I am unsure about it," said Tiffany, wife of Spc. Justin Dubbelde, of Sioux Falls. "It will be devastating with all of the kids – having to be strong for everyone."

"I am nervous, but more anxious to get this experience," said Spc. Dane Larsen, of Volga. "I have waited my whole life to deploy."

Despite any uncertainty, Gerlach knows his unit is in good hands.

"These Soldiers are trained, ready and I have no problem putting my life in their hands, as they would put theirs in mine," said Gerlach.



Sen. John Thune thanks a Soldier of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1742nd Transportation Company during the unit's deployment ceremony. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Beck)



Congresswoman Kristi Noem thanks a Soldier of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1742nd Transportation Company during the unit's deployment ceremony. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Beck)

152ND SOLDIERS RETURN FROM AFGHANISTAN



Group photo of the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, South Dakota Army National Guard, during the unit's welcome home ceremony Dec. 17, at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre. Soldiers of the 152nd completed a five-month deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck)

PIERRE – Hundreds of family members, friends and community supports gathered at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre Dec. 17 to welcome home 68 Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. The unit returned from a five-month deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

A ceremony was held in their honor, which included speakers Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Pierre Mayor Laurie Gill and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG.

"On behalf of all South Dakotans, welcome home," said Daugaard, during the ceremony.

"These Soldiers are the epitome of dependability, dedication and reliability, and we thank you for your service."

The Pierre-based 152nd deployed in July with a mission to provide multi-functional combat support and combat service support to forces throughout southern Afghanistan. Multi-functional areas include supply, transportation, maintenance and ordnance support.

"The mission that you performed was critical...and by all accounts, you performed

spectacularly," said Reisch. "When a unit returns, it's a great relief to the families, spouses, friends and employers who have gone without the companionship and assistance of these fine Soldiers. Your contribution to this deployment has not gone unnoticed and this nation is forever in your debt."



Gov. Dennis Daugaard welcomes back members of the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, South Dakota Army National Guard, during the unit's welcome home ceremony.

west, with units located at five forward operating bases.

To the unit's credit, they improved surveillance and reconnaissance along major supply routes by 50 percent from previous operations – identifying 450 credible threats that were addressed to make convoy operations safer for U.S. and coalition forces.

The unit also maintained a 98 percent readiness rate on all their task force's equipment, and they provided oversight of contracts total-

While in Afghanistan, the 152nd provided logistical command and control and coordination support for a task force within regional commands in the south and south-

ing \$48 million. They executed the movement of 6.5 million pounds of supplies during 150 convoys – covering more than 100,000 miles – to 35 different operating bases. These supplies supported more than 30,000 coalition troops.

"The unit's motto is 'Sustain the Fight,' and these Soldiers' response to that motto was 'One Team!'" said Lt. Col. Michael Oster, 152nd commander. "The 152nd Soldiers employed that motto throughout the entire deployment, and they pushed it down to every Soldier that served within our task force. There was nothing that we couldn't take on and that is exactly what they did each and every day, without question, without fail."

The 152nd also managed a central issue facility, which maintains more than 150,000 different lines of property worth more than \$26 million. The unit processed more than 80,000 transactions of those supplies.

"I could not be more proud to be the commander of this unit; as a team member, as a co-worker and as a member of such a great organization," said Oster.



Members of the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, SDNG, stand to be recognized during the unit's welcome home ceremony.



Staff Sgt. Taylor Sperle feeds his daughter for the first time at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, Dec. 23, during the 235th Military Police Company's welcome home ceremony.



Jennifer Loftin, wife of Sgt. Cody Loftin reacts to seeing the bus carrying her husband arrive at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck)



Sandy Crown, mother of Spc. David VanVleck, both of Hermosa, hugs her son as he arrives at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck)

MILITARY POLICE RETURN TO SOUTH DAKOTA

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – Amid the members of the 235th Military Police Company sat hundreds of family members, friends and community supporters at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, Dec. 23 to welcome home 124 Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard unit. The 235th returned from a nine-month deployment to Bagram Airfield Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The ceremony included speakers Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG.

Family members were overjoyed when the busses arrived with their escort provided by the Rapid City Police Department, Pennington County Sheriff's Department and the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

"It still seems unreal, it hasn't quite set in yet," said Sandy Crown, mother of David VanVleck, both of Hermosa. "It will finally seem normal when he is asleep at home tonight."

The Civic Center theater was filled almost to capacity with family, friends and well-wishers throughout the ceremony.

Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, spoke of reintegration of the 235th Soldiers back into their families.

"A lot of decisions have been made while you were gone," said Reisch. "I ask the Soldiers to ease back into the way things were."

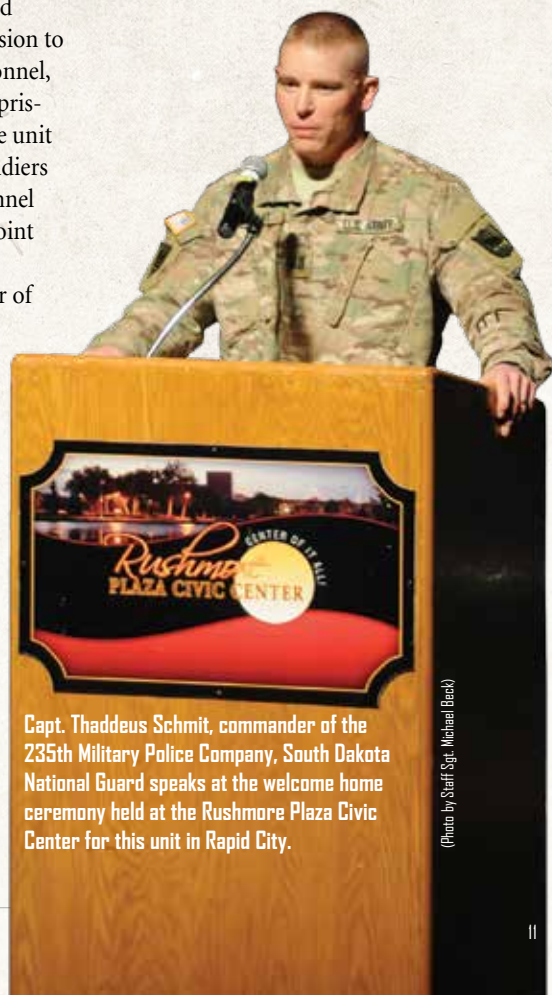
The Rapid City and Sioux Falls-based 235th deployed in February with a mission to provide security for U.S. military personnel, installation and facilities and to guard prisoners of war and civilian internees. The unit also trained Afghan National Army Soldiers in detainee operations, security, personnel and vehicle search and entry control point operations.

Capt. Thaddeus Schmit, commander of the 235th, remarked about the recognition from the active duty headquarters during their deployment.

"The sergeant major said 'when I am asked who my best line company is, I say the 235th MP company'," said Schmit. "The brigade colonel said 'I wish I could clone your unit and have five more companies just like it.'"

Gov. Dennis Daugaard remarked on the timeliness of the unit's return in time for the Christmas holiday.

"The best Christmas presents are here two days before Christmas," said Daugaard. "Welcome home."



Capt. Thaddeus Schmit, commander of the 235th Military Police Company, South Dakota Army National Guard speaks at the welcome home ceremony held at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center for this unit in Rapid City.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck)

GUARD GENERAL RETIRES AFTER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE TO STATE, NATION

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – Army Brig. Gen. Ted Johnson, of Rapid City, retired in January after more than 35 years of military service to the state and nation. Johnson retired as the director of the joint staff for the South Dakota National Guard and held numerous key leadership positions throughout the years. Johnson was honored for his service during a retirement ceremony Jan. 11 at the Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid.

As director of the joint staff, Johnson, 60, served as the top coordinating staff officer of both the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard. He assisted in preparing the more than 4,300 members of the Army and Air National Guard, and more than 960 full-time federal and state employees, to respond in times of state emergencies or national defense.

Johnson helped direct the Guard through the largest call up of SDNG forces since World War II, where more than 7,200 Soldiers in Airmen deployed over the last decade in support of the Global War on Terror. His leadership, enforcement of standards and emphasis on readiness contributed to

the successful mobilization of SDNG units and personnel during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Johnson's leadership and management of the joint staff and the employees of the SDNG ensured that units were properly manned, trained and equipped to go to war. He also impacted the long-term readiness and professionalism of the organization.

"General Johnson's high standards, superior intellect, professionalism and dedication to duty have directly contributed to the South Dakota National Guard being held in such high esteem for many years," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG. "His historical knowledge of the South Dakota National Guard is unparalleled by anyone in our great organization and he will be sorely missed."

Johnson, a native of Pipestone, Minn., began his long and distinguished career in April of 1972, where he enlisted in the Minnesota National Guard. He joined the SDNG in 1984 and received his commission as a second lieutenant from the South Dakota Military Academy's Officer Candidate School in 1985. In 1988, he was hired as a full-time federal technician.

Johnson held numerous leadership and staff positions within SDNG units. He commanded both the 211th and 214th Engineer Companies, as well as the 82nd Civil Support Team, and served in the 842nd Engineer Company, 109th Engineer Battalion, 88th Troop Command and Joint Force Headquarters. He was appointed to the rank of brigadier general on Oct. 1, 2007.

A notable highlight in Johnson's career was being the first and only general officer in the history of the SDNG to command a unit in combat; commanding the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade from 2010 to 2011 in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Johnson also served in many full-time positions in the SDNG to include state public affairs officer, director of military support to civil authorities, director of human resources, deputy chief of staff of operations and joint chief of staff.



Brig. Gen. Ted Johnson (U.S. Army National Guard photo)

"The highlight of my career was working with all the great Soldiers and Airmen in the South Dakota National Guard."

— Brig. Gen. Johnson

Some of Johnson's decorations and service medals include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal and the North Atlantic Treaty Organizational Medal.

Johnson was born on Aug. 3, 1953, in Pipestone to the late Donald and Betty Johnson, and his family includes seven brothers and sisters. His father served in the Pacific during World War II.

Johnson graduated from Pipestone High School and attended Saint Cloud State University where he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geography. In 1999, he received his Masters of Science in Public Administration from the University of South Dakota. In 2005, General Johnson received a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College.

He is married to LuAnne Johnson and their family includes children Jess, Matt, Kari Jo, Katie, Katie Marie and Nikki. Their family has grown to include many spouses and grandchildren.



South Dakota Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Ted Johnson, of Rapid City, speaks during his retirement ceremony, Jan. 11, at the Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid in Rapid City. After more than 35 years of service to the state and nation, Johnson retired as the director of the joint staff and held numerous key leadership positions throughout his tenure in the Guard. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Zack Frank, 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, stands by while Col. Russ Walz, 114th Fighter Wing commander, conducts pre-flight checks before being taxied onto the runway at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., Jan. 23. The commander and personnel from the South Dakota Air National Guard travelled to Davis-Monthan AFB to conduct mandatory training that can be difficult to accomplish during the harsh winter in South Dakota.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD TRAINS AT DAVIS-MONTHAN

Story and photo by Airman 1st Class Betty R. Chevalier — 355th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. – Ten F-16 Fighter Falcons and 150 Airmen from the South Dakota Air National Guard returned in January from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base where they conducted two weeks of mandatory readiness training.

The SDANG utilized Operation Snowbird, a program that allows northern tier ANG flying units to conduct training at Davis-Monthan and that would be hard, if not impossible in harsh weather conditions.

The 114th Fighter Wing, out of Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, shares a joint-use field with the civilian airport, which can also restrict some of their training.

“We don’t have live-weapon capability out at Joe Foss Field,” said Col. Russ Walz, 114th Fighter Wing commander. “When we get to a location like Davis-Monthan and we have that ability, then we certainly exercise it.”

As part of their deployment, pilots receive

the opportunity to do more night flying than normal.

“We will typically do one (night flight) a month,” Walz said. “When we get deployed,



we like to take advantage of that, especially with night weapons and ranges.”

This opportunity also gave many of the traditional Guardsmen the chance to work continuously. As members of the ANG, some Airmen work full-time while traditional

Guardsmen work one weekend a month.

The commander expressed his gratitude for being able to be a part of Operation Snowbird while emphasizing its importance.

Walz said that most of the 150 Airmen who visited are not full-time Guardsmen. They have primary civilian jobs ranging from bankers to doctors and lawyers.

“These opportunities give those Airmen a chance to step away from their civilian jobs and have a continuous, two-week period where they can focus on enhancing their military skills and career in the Air Force,” said Walz.

One of the Guardsmen’s favorite and more beneficial parts of the trip to Arizona was a break from the chilly weather of South Dakota.

“Maintenance is far easier with this weather,” said Tech. Sgt. Caleb DeGroot, 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron avionics technician.



The South Dakota Army National Guard 147th Army Band's country-rock ensemble Drive On entertained students at St. Thomas Moore High School in Rapid City as part of their annual training, Feb. 14. The band performed at eight schools on their tour throughout western South Dakota where they performed a 50-minute show featuring songs from Sweet Home Alabama by Lynrd Skynyrd to Grenade by Bruno Mars.



147TH ARMY BAND ROCKS WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOLS

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen — SDNG Public Affairs Office

Spc. Kimberly Meyer, of Mitchell, lead vocals and guitar for the South Dakota Army National Guard 147th Army Band's country-rock ensemble Drive On, performs for students at St. Thomas More High School in Rapid City, Feb. 14. The band performed at eight schools on their tour throughout western South Dakota where they performed a 50-minute show featuring songs from Sweet Home Alabama by Lynrd Skynyrd to Grenade by Bruno Mars.



RAPID CITY – Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard 147th Army Band, of Mitchell, performed for high school and middle school students across western South Dakota with a country-rock band performance Feb. 8-14.

Drive On is one of seven music ensembles the 147th Army Band offers. The band originated as a country band but has evolved to include more genres such as classic rock and pop music, since its debut in 2011.

The band traveled to eight schools as part of their annual training to expose students to live music and the SDARNG.

Several of the 147th music ensembles are also conducting their annual training performing for students throughout the state to include: SGT ROCK, performing current hits from today's pop artists to rock classics; FTX, features a variety of jazz, funk, pop, rock and rap; Mission Essential, a brass quintet focusing on patriotic tunes, classical pieces and popular hits; and Black Ops, an all clarinet group who plays old classics to today's pop hits.

"Students now know the National Guard has more opportunities than driving trucks," said Staff Sgt. Richard Larson, Drive On non-commissioned-officer-in-charge. "If nothing else, they were entertained."

During their 50-minute show, the band played songs from Sweet Home Alabama by Lynrd Skynyrd to Grenade by Bruno Mars.

"This is great. The students love it," said Lloyd Potter, St. Thomas More High School band teacher. "This performance exposes them to live music, which is much better than listening to a CD or iPod."

During the performance, Drive On invited Potter onstage to play guitar during the song Sweet Home Alabama.

"The students enjoyed seeing their teacher play guitar," said Larson. "They were really cheering for him."

Coincidentally, Larson and Potter know each other.

"Mr. Potter was my high school band teacher in Plankinton back in 1996," said Larson. "I called him a week ago and asked if he wanted to play during our performance."

Potter had only one week to practice the song before joining them live onstage but said it was workable due to their musical talent.

"It was easy and fun; they are all great musicians," said Potter. "Hopefully, some of the younger students will get excited about staying in band or pick up a new instrument such as the guitar, drums or flute."

After the performance, the band held a 10-minute forum encouraging students to ask questions about music or the SDARNG.

Students asked questions ranging from whether or not this is the band's full-time job to how to set-up equipment for their own band.

"In Custer, we had a few students in their own band who asked a few questions about setting up equipment," said Sgt. Lisa Groon, lead vocal. "They were thankful for the information and are now going make a few changes that will make things better."

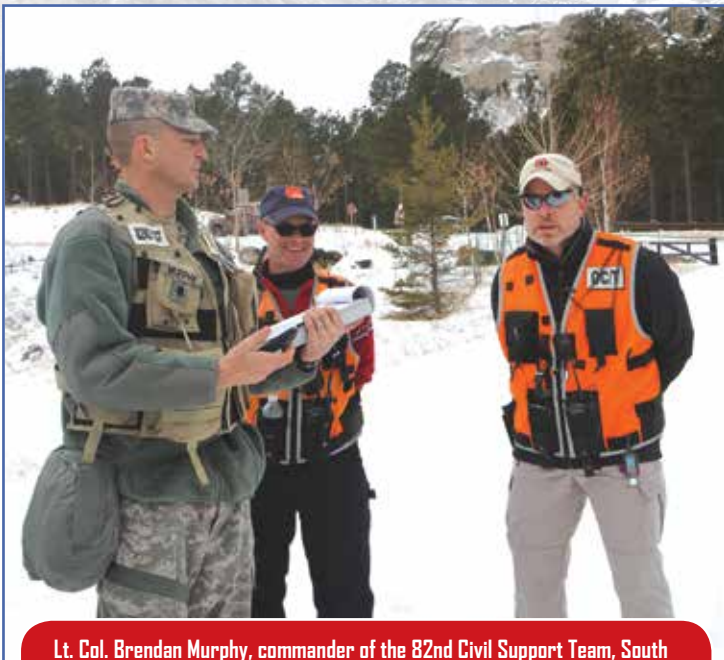
Groon said although it is rewarding to perform music for the students it is even more rewarding to educate them.



Spc. Kimberly Meyer, and Sgt. Amanda Wittemeier both of Mitchell and members of the South Dakota Army National Guard 147th Army Band's country-rock ensemble Drive On, performs for students at St. Thomas More High School in Rapid City, Feb. 14.



NATIONAL GUARD RESPONDERS TRAIN AT 'SHRINE OF DEMOCRACY'



Lt. Col. Brendan Murphy, commander of the 82nd Civil Support Team, South Dakota National Guard, goes over his team's battle plan with Dave Yandon, exercise specialist, and Jeff Taylor, a division chief, both with Civil Support Training Activity, U.S. Army North, Feb. 11, during a training exercise at Mount Rushmore National Park that involved the 82nd CST as well as local first responders.

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos
U.S. Army North Public Affairs Office

KEYSTONE – As part of a U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) training exercise, a small team of South Dakota National Guard service members assisted local emergency responders in investigating a simulated chemical and radiological incident Feb. 11 at America's "Shrine of Democracy."

The 22-person team of Soldiers and Airmen with the 82nd Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) received a call from the Rapid City Hazmat team asking for assistance in identifying a potential radiological threat found at Mount Rushmore National Park.

The scenario was part of a training event the members of Charlie Division, Civil Support Training Activity, Army North, designed for the CST as part of the unit's pre-certification training. In April, the 82nd will be evaluated and certified by the CSTA through a technical proficiency exercise, required every 18 months.

"This week you are our customers," said Jeff Taylor, a division chief with CSTA. "Next time we get together the National Guard Bureau and your governor will be. This is the time to ask us questions."

Before the exercise started, Taylor gave the CST members one final piece of advice saying, "Don't focus on the shiny penny; look at everything in the area."



Members of the 82nd Civil Support Team, South Dakota National Guard, and the Keystone Fire Department discuss coordination procedures at Mount Rushmore National Park Feb. 11, during a training exercise at the monument. The exercise was designed by U.S. Army North (Fifth Army)'s Civil Support Training Activity to test the unit's ability to work with local first responders and respond to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident.

Army Staff Sgt. Robert Robertson from the 82nd Civil Support Team, South Dakota National Guard, suits up in his level-A suit during a training exercise at Mount Rushmore National Park Feb. 11. The exercise, designed by U.S. Army North (Fifth Army)'s Civil Support Training Activity, was designed to test the unit's ability to work with local first responders and respond to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident.



"We arrived and called for a hazmat team because this is beyond our capabilities and resources we have here in Keystone," said Lt. Mark Enright, Keystone Fire Dept. Once the Rapid City Hazmat team arrived, they called the 82nd CST to get additional specialized support.

The members of the 82nd also found the multi-agency training beneficial.

"This is a full-time job; we're on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," said Air National Guard Lt. Col. Dale Gadbois, the deputy commander of the 82nd CST. "It's imperative we know how to work together as a team, and work with local first responders."

One of the things that made this type of scenario more difficult – than one that takes place in a building or an enclosed area – is there is no way to completely know how many people may have been affected by the incident, or even how many people were in the area at the time.

"While this type of incident hasn't happened before, it could happen, so it's important to be prepared for it," said Scott Davis, a park ranger at Mount Rushmore. "We have tour groups and families coming into the park every day." During February, the park gets around 1,000 visitors a day.

While the training was specifically for the 82nd to prepare for their certification, CSTA invited local first responders to the training because in a real-life situation the CST would be part of a multi-agency response force.

"To get the number of participants we have together from all the various agencies gives them an opportunity to work out exactly how they'd respond in a real situation," said Taylor.

The scenario the CST, along with the Keystone Fire Department and the Rapid City Hazmat team, responded to involved a tour group at Mount Rushmore who left a backpack at the viewing area. The backpack then began dispersing radioactive material. As the tour group hurried to leave, a second device sprayed the area with a chemical compound. After evacuating the area, rangers from the U.S. Park Service called the local Keystone Fire Department.

While the park would have shut down in the event of a real incident, the park remained open during the training. Several of the visitors had an opportunity to watch some of the training.

"I find it fascinating," said Dawn West, a park visitor from Willow Creek, Calif. "It wouldn't occur to me that anyone would attack us here, but the mountain is a symbol of our nation, so unfortunately it makes sense."

West's husband Paul added that while it was unfortunate that this type of scenario had to be rehearsed, it was good that it was.

"Hopefully this type of scenario will stay just that, but I see how easy it would be for someone to carry out this type of attack."

South Dakota's CST is one of 57 such specialized National Guard teams around the nation that provide support to civil authorities in the event of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents by deploying rapidly to assist local first responders in determining the precise nature of an incident, provide expert medical and technical advice, and help pave the way for the identification and arrival of follow-on military support.

SD NATIONAL GUARD HOSTS *30th Annual Legislative Dining-Out*



NorthWestern Energy is presented with the 2013 South Dakota Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Pro Patria Award during the South Dakota National Guard Legislative Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel in Pierre, Feb. 6. The award is presented by Gov. Dennis Daugaard to NorthWestern Energy's Robert Lowe, CEO (third from left) and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Schoenfelder, foreman (far right). Also pictured from left is Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, Paul Mock, ESGR national chair, and Mr. Ron Mielke, ESGR-SD chair. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Don Matthews)

The South Dakota National Guard hosted the 2014 Legislative Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, Feb. 6. This annual tradition has brought Guardsmen and the state Legislature together for a formal evening for the last 30 years, but the tradition of the dining-out and/or dining-in date back much further.

"The Guard is an organization that is rich in history and tradition," said Maj. Corey Norris, SDNG congressional action contact officer. "This event provides the Guard an opportunity to honor the legislators by hosting them at a traditional military event where we highlight our significant accomplishments to the community, state and nation."

The atmosphere, while formal, includes deep-rooted traditions which lighten the mood and provide both members and guests not only plenty of laughs, but a chance to learn some of the organizations history and traditions and an opportunity to recognize individual and/or unit achievements.

The Legislature was also shown a video highlighting 2013 and the many accomplishments made by the men and women of the SDNG. In addition to the many SDNG accomplishments highlighted during the

night, the Guard also recognized a family member, employer and public servant with an award for their contributions to the SDNG mission.

Pro Patria Award NorthWestern Energy

The awards portion of the dining-out began by presenting NorthWestern Energy with the 2013 South Dakota Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (SD ESGR) Pro Patria Award.

The Pro Patria Award is presented to the one employer in the state who provides the most exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

NorthWestern Energy is an investor-owned utility and one of the largest providers of electricity and natural gas in the northwest quadrant of the United States and serves approximately 673,200 customers in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska. With its corporate headquarters in Sioux Falls, NorthWestern Energy employs more than 1,400 people, including Chief Warrant Officer 4, Kenneth Schoenfelder, a foreman with the company and member of

the SDNG's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

"Employers are inextricably linked to the nation's defense by sharing their most precious assets, their employees," said Maj. Lona Christensen, SD ESGR executive director, during the award presentation. "NorthWestern Energy is being recognized for their outstanding contributions to the state and nation's military services. Their leadership exemplifies the patriotic spirit that is alive and well here in our great state of South Dakota."

NorthWestern Energy realizes the importance of a strong force and provides support and opportunities to members of the armed forces. Employees of NorthWestern Energy are provided differential pay, accumulation of paid time off, and access to health insurance at the employee share cost for the first six months of their military duty.

NorthWestern Energy has fully supported Chief Schoenfelder's military career. Since Desert Storm, he has deployed three times and with each deployment he and his family have received increased support from NorthWestern Energy. This support came in the form of care packages, co-workers checking in on the family, and assistance when things need to be fixed.



Gov. Dennis Daugaard is presented with the 2014 Williamson Militiaman Award by Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, left, SDNG adjutant general, and Maj. Gen. Ronald Williamson (retired), during the South Dakota National Guard Legislative Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel in Pierre, Feb. 6. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Don Matthews)

The Williamson Militiaman Award Gov. Dennis Daugaard

The SDNG next awarded the 2014 Williamson Militiaman Award to Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

The Williamson Militiaman Award was established in 1987 by Maj. Gen. Ronald F. Williamson (retired) to recognize an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of our country.

As the Governor of South Dakota, Daugaard also serves as commander-in-chief of the SDNG. Since taking office in January of 2011, Gov. Daugaard has been a tremendous supporter of the Guard.

"He is the type of leader that understands the value of the National Guard, and recognizes the unique talents that Soldiers and Airmen possess, and the broad variety of missions they are capable of accomplishing," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG.

Daugaard has not hesitated to call upon the Guard in support of state emergencies. He personally led emergency flood protection efforts to avoid catastrophic flooding along the Missouri River just months after taking office, and would call on approximately 1,900 Guardsmen to combat flooding. The following year, he called on his forces to provide aviation fire suppression on 17 wild fires. In October 2013, 131 Guardsmen and women once again answered the governor's call to support local citizens in western South Dakota after Winter Storm Atlas devastated the region.

While serving as the lieutenant governor and governor, Daugaard has seen more than 7,200 of South Dakota's citizen-Soldiers and Airmen deploy in support of overseas contingency operations, and he attended nearly every activation and welcome home ceremony held for South Dakota units. In April of 2012, Daugaard showed tremendous leadership when he traveled to Kuwait and Afghanistan and met with three SDNG units that were deployed there. Soldiers were thrilled their commander-in-chief cared so deeply about them that he would risk his personal safety to visit them in a combat zone.

Past recipients of the award include: Former Adjutants General Phil Killey and Harold Sykora, former U.S. Senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson, and former Governors William J. Janklow and M. Michael Rounds.



Mrs. LuAnne Johnson, wife of recently retired Brig. Gen. Ted Johnson, is presented the 2013 Adjutant General's Family Award by Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, during the South Dakota National Guard Legislative Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel in Pierre, Feb. 6. The award recognizes those family members who support their service members in an exemplary manner while managing family, careers, or even hardship, all the while not seeking recognition for their sacrifices. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Don Matthews)

The Adjutant General's Family Award Mrs. LuAnne Johnson

To conclude the awards portion of the evening, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch awarded the 2013 Adjutant General's Family Award to Mrs. LuAnne Johnson of Rapid City.

"As the adjutant general, I recognize the vital importance of our families to the success of our National Guard mission," Reisch said during the award presentation. "The goal of this award is to recognize those family members who support their service members in an exemplary manner while managing family, careers, or even hardship, all the while not seeking recognition for their sacrifices."

LuAnne is the wife of recently retired Brig. Gen. Ted Johnson. As both a wife and mother of National Guard members, she is a dedicated volunteer and has been a mainstay in the SDNG for many years. LuAnne attended countless activation and welcome home ceremonies since 9-11, served as integral member of several Family Readiness Groups, and supported service members, their families and retirees. She has also served as the co-chair for the Elder Tree Program during the past 10 years, which provides gifts and necessary items to veterans in need throughout the Black Hills area.

"LuAnne's attributes of strength, faith, optimism, resiliency and perseverance have made her an invaluable resource for the National Guard for years," said Reisch during the ceremony. "She truly epitomizes what this award is all about – a family member who has supported their service member and others in a truly exemplary manner, while never seeking recognition for her efforts."

Following the awards ceremony and bringing the evening to a close, Gov. Dennis Daugaard addressed the Soldiers, Airmen in attendance. Daugaard specifically thanked Guard members for their continuous support on missions both at home and abroad.

SD AIR NATIONAL GUARD ANNOUNCES AIRMEN OF THE YEAR

Story by Technical Sgt. Christopher Stewart — 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Senior Master Sgt. Zona Hornstra, of Sioux Falls, with the SDANG 114th Medical Group, was named the 114th Fighter Wing Outstanding Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for 2013.



Tech. Sgt. Christopher Wilsey, of Luverne, Minn., with the SDANG 114th Security Forces Squadron, was named the 114th Fighter Wing Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for 2013.



Senior Airman Kammi Fiegen, of Parkston, with the SDANG 114th Medical Group, was named the 114th Fighter Wing Outstanding Airman of the Year for 2013.



Chief Master Sgt. Randy Wingen, of Crooks, with the SDANG 114th Fighter Wing, was named the 114th Fighter Wing's First Sergeant of the Year for 2013.

The South Dakota Air National Guard announced its Outstanding First Sergeant, Senior Noncommissioned Officer, Noncommissioned Officer and Airman of the Year for 2013. The selection board chose the Airmen based on their superior leadership, job performance, community involvement and personal achievements.

Senior Master Sgt. Zona Hornstra, of Sioux Falls, is the Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year. Hornstra has served 17 years with the 114th Medical Group. She started her military career as a medical element medic and has since worked her way up to superintendent of nursing services. Hornstra has spent 26 years as a registered dental hygienist and oral educator in Sioux Falls.

"It is definitely an honor to be selected," said Hornstra. "There are so many exceptional and professional military members within the unit, it's a huge compliment."

Technical Sgt. Christopher Wilsey, of Luverne, Minn., is the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. He joined the Security Forces Squadron in October 2000.

"While I was looking at different Army National Guard units, my uncle asked me if I had looked at the Air National Guard," said Wilsey. "He brought me over for a tour and I signed my enlistment papers that day."

Wilsey has a full-time career as a plant manager for Minnesota Special Liquids, a liquid feed manufacturing company, where he has been working for 10 years.

"Receiving this award is a great honor. My superiors have always placed a lot of faith in me," said Wilsey. "All their faith means a lot, and I have always tried to meet their expectations."

When asked about his future goals Wilsey said that he would like to one day become the first sergeant for the Security Forces Squadron.

The Airman of the Year is Senior Airman Kammi Fiegen, of Parkston. Fiegen joined the Medical Group of the 114th Fighter Wing in 2010. She was recently hired on full-time as a health technician in the squadron.

"My influence to join the National Guard came from my dad, Todd Fiegen," she said. "He is prior service Army and Army National Guard."

Fiegen says it was an honor to be chosen as the 2013 Outstanding Airman of the Year.

"It was truly an amazing experience to be recognized as an outstanding Airman," she said. "I hope I can continue to make my peers and supervisors proud."

Fiegen plans to make a career out of the Air National Guard. She says she enjoys being part of the South Dakota Air National Guard because of the people she works with.

Chief Master Sgt. Randy Wingen, of Crooks, is the Outstanding First Sergeant of the Year.

Wingen joined the Air National Guard in July of 1992. He currently serves as first sergeant for the 114th Fighter Wing. In his civilian job he repairs broken lab equipment for Sanford Hospital as a bio-medical technician.

"Being selected for this award is quite an honor," said Wingen. "It's something I don't take lightly."

This is the second time Wingen has been selected for this award, but the biggest accomplishment he is proud of is helping people.

"When you help someone with a problem it is always really special," he said. "There is no award or dollar value you can put on that."

The 2013 Outstanding Airmen of the Year will represent the 114th Fighter Wing as they compete against other Air National Guard members nationwide to determine the overall Air National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year.

CONGRATULATIONS

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

HELP SERVICE MEMBERS, FAMILIES ADVANCE CAREERS

By Dan Popowski

South Dakota has the benefit of having one of the lowest unemployment rates within the United States. Behind North Dakota and their booming oil business, South Dakotans, when compared to the rest of the nation, seem to know what they're doing when searching for a job. Maybe it is work ethic, or maybe it is the good old fashioned mentality of knowing good things come from hard work. We realize the job is not going to come to us; we have to go get the job.

Having one of the lower unemployment rates allows the Hero2Hired program in South Dakota to assist individuals looking to further advance their career. Some may not have known how to translate their military skills or write a resume for that next-level position. H2H assists with resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, job search preparation and translating military related experience.

H2H and its partners, Employer Support

of the Guard and Reserve and Service Member & Family Support, are spearheading an effort to make sure employment resources are ready and available to interested individuals. There are multiple opportunities throughout the year for service members and their families to take part in Employment Assistance Training workshops. These workshops consist of multiple modules covering resume and cover letter writing, interviewing preparation, assistance with the job search, and an H2H walkthrough.

One of the biggest issues service members face is translating military experience into terms civilian employers can understand. How does a combat engineer apply for a business analyst position? Having relevant education does help, but it alone will not get them the job. We tend to focus on our learned skill sets, like placing and detonating explosives, or shooting our rifles during qualification. What we fail to focus on are the soft skills we

learn while in the military. Skills like interpersonal communication, leadership, teamwork, administrative tasks, training development, supervision, management and the list goes on. We can't back ourselves into the corner by focusing on one specific area of skills. Service members have many qualifications large corporations pay big money for, because we gain and maintain them through military training.

By attending the Employment Assistance Training workshops, you will receive training from individuals who work in the career counseling field, as well as human resources professionals and are involved in the daily hiring and processing of candidates. This is the best place to find that kind of information. For information regarding these events, or how to attend please contact Dan Popowski at 605-357-2913 or Maj. Lona Christensen at 605-737-6540.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO FIND A JOB.

Searching for a new job is a big undertaking. H2H has the tools and resources Reserve Component service members need to find a job - all in one place, all free.



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Soldiers from the Suriname Army's Special Forces march during Suriname's National Day celebration and parade the Para District, Nov. 25. (Photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss)

SD LEADERS VISIT SURINAME TO BOLSTER STATE PARTNERSHIP

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

Senior leaders from the South Dakota Governor's Office and the National Guard visited the Republic of Suriname; South Dakota's State Partnership Program nation, Nov. 25-26. The visit to the South American country was an opportunity to reinforce the existing partnership between the South Dakota National Guard and Suriname military.

Lt. Gov. Matt Michels and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG, met with U.S. Ambassador to Suriname Jay N. Anania and Suriname Minister of Defense Lamuré Latour to collaborate on ideas for working together and to provide training opportunities for both organizations. They also had the opportunity to greet Suriname President Dési Bouterse during Suriname's National Day celebration.

"The South Dakota and Suriname partnership has been a very positive relationship. This not only includes joint military activities but also humanitarian efforts throughout the years," said Ambassador Anania during the visit. "Meeting with key leaders helps to reinforce the importance of the partnership and to continue our goals for the program."

"The relationship has been long-standing and we have exchanged information and subject matter experts for the benefit of all involved," said Lt. Gov. Michels of the partnership.

The South Dakota and Suriname partnership was formally established in August of 2006. Since then, numerous exchanges have taken place

between South Dakota and Suriname to share experiences and best practices in a variety of military training.

"South Dakota's partnership with Suriname has become widely

known as one of the most active and enduring partnerships of any state or territory," said Reisch. "In spite of changes in civil or military leadership, the partnership has continued to strengthen year after year."

Ambassador Anania commented on the value of Guardsmen participating in Operation Beyond the Horizon in Suriname in 2008, a humanitarian mission to provide health services and repair clinics, as well as Suriname soldiers coming to South Dakota to observe crisis operations and management during the 2011 Missouri River flood.

"As we move forward with the partnership, I believe we want to build upon the exchanges we have had," said Anania. "The fact that we've had such a strong partnership will bolster new opportunities for training and learning."

The National Guard Bureau's State Part-

nership Program provides unique capacity-building capabilities to combatant commanders through partnerships between U.S. states and foreign countries. The program helps to support U.S. national interests and security cooperation goals by engaging partner nations through military, social, political and economic conduits at the local, state and national level.

"I think we get more out of these types of programs than we give," said Michels. "I look at the South Dakota National Guard individuals who have been involved down here and have developed very long relationships. These relationships transcend governments, ambassadors, or anyone who is rotating through. This program is a rare constant."

"Things change, budgets change, governments change, but in some way the State Partnership Program to assist in terms of diplomatic work, regional security and more importantly developing relationships will last a long time. I couldn't be more proud of our Army and Air National Guard."



Suriname President Dési Bouterse visits with Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, during Suriname's National Day celebration in the Para District, Nov. 25.

(Photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss)



South Dakota Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, right, speaks with U.S. Ambassador to Suriname Jay N. Anania during Suriname's National Day celebration in the Para District on Nov. 25. (Photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss)

SD GUARD, SURINAME MILITARY CONDUCT *Women's Workshops*

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

Women from the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard traveled to the South American country of Suriname in November, as part of the State Partnership Program, to participate in a 'Women in the Military' workshop with members the Suriname armed forces. The goal of the meeting was to promote awareness, equality and future opportunities for women in the military.

Ms. Danielle Veire, deputy director of personnel and general affairs of Suriname's Ministry of Defense, kicked off the Nov. 26-27 workshop by welcoming approximately 20 women serving in Suriname's armed forces and four from the SDNG.

"We are having a subject matter expert exchange on women serving in the military centered on female issues in the armed forces," said Veire, who was the first woman to serve as advisor to the commander of Suriname's armed forces. "The women are delighted for the workshop and we are doing our utmost to share information on values, leadership and encourage each other to do their best in the armed forces."

Army Maj. Kathy Dirk, SDNG state partnership program coordinator and participant in the event, said the workshop focused on development of leadership skills, self-assessments, briefings on equal opportunity and how women in the U.S. military and SDNG have progressed through the years.

"We gave them a timeline of women's progression in the military and in the South Dakota Guard – where we came from, how we've moved forward and that we're still moving," said Dirk.

Dirk said women have only been serving in the SDNG for less than 50 years and there is still ground to be made.

"We're really not that far advanced as far as women in the military," she said. "We just wanted to let them know and give them examples that it's still a daily struggle for us to get a hold in the organization."

Veire shares Dirks concern on equal opportunities for women stating "on paper the opportunities for Suriname women are

endless, but in real life there are still some issues they have to overcome."

"Until now, women were only allowed to hold administrative positions and we hope in the nearby future we will also be able to hold combat positions," continued Veire. "My hope is women will not be looked at to serve in positions because of function but because of their competencies and skills."

One area both the Suriname and South Dakota women are working to make advancements in is mentorship.

"One thing we have both identified we need is mentorship," said Dirk. "We need mentorship from the people who have advanced in their careers, whether they're in the military now or have retired, and use that knowledge of the barriers that they fought through."

"Their input is tremendous," said Veire of the SDNG women. "It is an opportunity for our female officers to see that there are women with similar issues, and they were able to overcome some of them already."

Chief Master Sgt. Jennifer Reecy, a workshop participant and member of the South Dakota Air National Guard, also felt the exchange of ideas was beneficial.

"One of the biggest pieces I will take away from this experience is the growth and development that we came to give and also receive in a mutual relationship with the Suriname women," said Reecy, a personnel superintendent for the 114th Fighter Wing. "By growing in both a personal and professional capacity we move our organizations forward."

Lt. Col. John Weber, director of the SDNG SPP, says this exchange is helping to pave the way for future change in Suriname.

"The exchanges with Suriname involving women in the military has set the stage for



Ms. Danielle Veire, deputy director of personnel and general affairs of Suriname's Ministry of Defense, leads a discussion on issues females face in the military with women from the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard and the Suriname armed forces in Paramaribo, Suriname, Nov. 26. (Photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss)

change to policy in the Suriname military," said Weber. "These changes are intended to promote awareness, equality and future opportunities for women in the military. Suriname will determine policy for their armed forces, which will directly be attributed to the outcomes of the workshops conducted with the Guard and Suriname."



An all-woman color guard from the South Dakota National Guard carries the U.S. and S.D. flags during Suriname's National Day celebration and parade in the Para District, Nov. 25. (Photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss)



Pfc. Erika Cotton, left, and Pvt. Stephanie Kasten, the first females in South Dakota Army National Guard history to enlist and serve as 13M Multiple Launch Rocket System crewmembers, stand in front of an M270A1 launcher from Battery A, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion in Aberdeen. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Charles Butler)

SD GUARD SOLDIERS MAKE HISTORY AS FIRST FEMALE ARTILLERY CREWMEMBERS

By Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen — SDNG Public Affairs Office

Two young women made South Dakota Army National Guard history by enlisting as the first females to serve as Multiple Launch Rocket System crewmembers in the state.

Pfc. Erika Cotton, 19, of Volga, recently graduated from 13M crewmember Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sill, Okla., and Pvt. Stephanie Kasten, 18, of Hazel, will be attending her advance training this summer. Both are members of Battery A, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion in Aberdeen.

The Multiple Launch Rocket System, or MLRS, is a highly mobile, automatic system that fires surface-to-surface rockets and missiles from the M270 platform. From inside the cab, the crew of three can fire up to 12 MLRS rockets or two tactical missiles.

Cotton and Kasten's opportunity to serve as MLRS artillery crewmembers comes at a time of significant change in the U.S. military. In January 2013, former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, announced the rescission of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, which restricted women from joining artillery, armor, infantry and other combat roles.

The policy change now allows women to serve in every position within the SDNG.

"In the case of Pfc. Cotton and Pvt. Kasten, they have an opportunity to be part of the historical push to allow females to perform a job based on their abilities and not their gender," said S.D. Army Guard State Command Sgt. Maj. Susan Shoe, senior noncommissioned officer. "That is huge. The opportunity for these two female Soldiers to learn a job they want is the significant change that was needed for our military to continue to be successful in the 21st century."

Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Rose, senior noncommissioned officer for the 1-147th Field Artillery, recognizes the importance of Soldiers joining the military regardless of gender.

"I am proud when anyone raises their right hand to swear in and serve, female or male," said Rose. "I hope they are looking for a challenge and a chance to learn and grow within a professional organization."

A self-proclaimed "daddy's girl," Kasten, a senior at Hamlin High School, who plays hockey and enjoys hunting, wanted to join the Guard and do something similar to infantry. Kasten talked with her recruiter prior to the policy change about her potential opportunities.

"At the time when I talked with my recruiter, I found that all of the jobs I was interested in were not available to females," said Kasten.

Women restricted from joining the field artillery has been the norm for Rose, who has served in the Guard for the past 29 years.

"It was that way when I joined the field artillery in 1985. At the time, we were required to lift 100 pounds to load rounds into the cannons," said Rose. "Today, we use cranes to load and transport rockets. We no longer have the demands of lifting heavy rounds. I see nothing in the field artillery tasks that would limit females from performing any assigned duties."

As 13M crewmembers, Kasten and Cotton's job duties are to drive and maintain the self-propelled launch vehicles, reload ammunition and resupply vehicles, test and maintain the fire-control systems and mount radio sets and communication systems.

A few months after Kasten's discussion with her recruiter, she called to inform her that women are now eligible to join the field artillery for the first time in the history of the SDNG; if she was still interested.

Kasten signed up and became the first female to enlist in the SDNG as an MLRS crewmember.

"I like to shoot guns, so being able to shoot missiles really stuck out to me and I felt capable of being the first female in the unit," she said.

From the time Kasten enlisted up until now, she has felt welcomed in the unit and is treated

no differently despite being the first woman, said Kasten.

Not long after Kasten joined, another young female chose to take the challenge and enlist. Cotton, a freshman studying Animal Science at South Dakota State University, knew she wanted to serve her country since attending her school's Veteran's Day program when she was 15.

"Joining the South Dakota National Guard had been in the back of my mind since my freshman year of high school," said Cotton. "It was that year's Veteran's Day service that really

got the wheels turning. When all of the service-men and women stood up to be recognized, I just knew that it was something I wanted to be a part of."

Cotton recalls the moment her recruiter came to her family's house to talk about the different units and jobs available in the Guard.

"He explained to my parents and me that there were a few openings here, a few openings there and then he mentioned field artillery," said Cotton. "I said without hesitating that is what I want to do, causing my mom to jump

when she heard me say that. Who wouldn't want to drive huge rockets around and shoot missiles?"

The thrill of having the opportunity to shoot rockets is what motivated Cotton to accept the challenges of joining a unit not accustomed to women.

"I was told by a few others that there would be some people who don't think it's a woman's job," said Cotton. "I knew that I would have to work hard from the start, physically and mentally, to prove that I can actually do this. And that's what I've been doing."

Cotton credits her can-do attitude and work ethic to growing up on her family's ranch near Volga.

"Even though I am a female, my dad still taught me everything from how to fix fence, to drive our old Massey tractor, to breaking ice for our cows," she said. "I am very appreciative of how I was raised; thick skin, an open mind and a South Dakota work ethic has gotten me pretty far in life."

Diversity, opportunity and perspective are all positive reasons to accept females into field artillery, said Rose.

"We currently have several female Soldiers that work within our battalion, these two happened to have stepped up to be the first to join the 13M career field in South Dakota," said Rose. "They have made a big commitment to themselves and their country. In my mind they have joined an elite group of people that are willing to be called upon in the time of need."

Rose anticipates more females will be joining the field artillery and looks forward to their first female officer.

"We are currently looking for our first female 13 series career field artillery officer," said Rose. "That will also be a historical moment for us and that individual."

State Command Sgt. Maj. Shoe agrees with Rose about the future of women serving in any SDNG position.

"Throughout recorded history, women have been an integral part of the military, whether officially or unofficially," said Shoe. "The last decade of wars has proven that the operational definition of combat means engaging the enemy in many capacities and not necessarily on a proverbial 'front line.' Women should be given the opportunity to serve in a position they can excel at and shouldn't be categorized in any manner other than the bottom line, can you do the job or not? If you can, then go for it!"

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Earth Day Celebration	April 26	Dueling Pianos	Sept. 6
Spring Market & Pet Day	May 3	Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival	Sept. 27
Spring Market & Frühlingfest	May 10	Bierbörse	Oct. 4
Kids' Carnival	May 31	Scare in the Square	Oct. 25
Summer Concert Series Kickoff	May 29	Ice Skating	November-February
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(Thursdays) June 5 to Aug. 28		Holiday Celebration	Nov. 29
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